115 There were both "wild" and "village" Veddas even in the days of his youth, and the only difficulty experienced with the old man was in keeping the two classes perfectly distinct in his mind. The following facts were elicited in the course of three interviews, each lasting somewhat less than an hour. He stated that he was just able to walk when he came to the Eastern Province, and that as he grew up he spent much of his time with the Veddas hunting and collecting honey. The [156] Veddas of those days were a merry people, and with a most eloquent gesture the old man showed how they would throw dry leaves into the air and shout and dance for happiness; he said also that they were absolutely truthful. Every Vedda carried a 411 bow and arrows and an axe; more arrows than one were carried, but it was not clear that they only carried two; it seemed that *tudadi*, a word that the old man said was used to describe the number of arrows carried, may have meant a small quantity or may have been a hunting term corresponding to "brace" or "leash." The old man had seen Veddas shoot lying on their backs and holding the bow with their feet, but this was only for amusement and to show their skill, no serious shooting was done in this way. The feathers of peacocks, herons and hawks were especially used in feathering arrows; any of these [262] birds would be shot with an ordinary arrow, and peacock was eaten as was jungle fowl, though no one would eat porcupine or buffalo; for these abstinences he could give no reason. Traps 226 were not used. Fish were eaten, being caught by poisoning the 278 water of pools with the bark of *damba*, *mahapata*, *puruhata* (? *Entada scandens*) and the fruit of *timbiri* (*Diospyros embryopteris*) and *kuburuman* (*Adenanthera bicolor*). Pots and bark 415 cloth bags were made and betel pouches of monkey skin, though even then some village Veddas had cloth betel bags, and these occasionally reached the wilder Veddas. Among the village 304 Veddas both sexes bored their ears and the women wore ivory 301 studs in them; whether the women of the wilder groups bored 184 their ears and wore these ornaments was not clear, certainly 372 the men did not. Fire was obtained from two pieces of wood by drilling.

342 The wilder Veddas of those days built no houses but lived
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Plate XII

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Fig. 1. Mixed Sinhalese and Vedda classes at Bandarawela

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#115

Fig. 2. Uraliha Veddas

[facing p. 42]

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AXS Vedda AXS

sparse undergrowth, so that it was an ideal place for a camp within easy distance of water. They may remain at this place three or four months, or even longer, before they seek a new village site, but probably they never go far from Horabora tank, on account of the great supply of lotus and other seeds which the lake affords.

"None of them is tattooed, and they wear very few ornaments. Both sexes, however, perforate the lobe of the ear, and through the opening pass a wire, strung with beads or seeds. The women sometimes enlarge this perforation, and wear in it a plug, made by rolling a strip of palm leaf into a cylinder, from one half to an inch in diameter.

"We got from them one of their earthen bowls that had rough patterns drawn upon it, but saw no other evidence of artistic ability. They make coarse mats and baskets of reeds and strips of bamboo, and use gourds and coconut shells for water bottles and cups. Spoons and ladles they make from a piece of coconut shell, with two holes, on one side, and a stick thrust through them to form a handle[1]."

Village Veddas of Tamankaduwa.

There are a number of communities of village Veddas in Tamankaduwa, all of which show marked evidence of intermarriage with the Sinhalese and Tamils.

Kiulotaliya. There is a large Vedda chena here, but most of its inhabitants were away at the time of our visit, those present appeared distinctly half-bred. Their mode of life is similar to that prevalent at Dambani and Bulugahalanda, i.e. they are occupied in chena cultivation, cattle rearing, and do a little hunting, but as they have not specially preserved it for show purposes they have forgotten the Vedda dialect. However, they remember their marriage and practise exogamy; they also reverence the Nae Yaka.

Kalukalaeba. Another settlement was seen at Kalukalaeba, here were about twelve mud huts, all empty on our arrival, as it was the harvesting season and the people had gone to live

[1] "Notes of a trip to the Veddas of Ceylon." *Bulletin of the Free Museum of Science and Art of the University of Pennsylvania*, Vol. III, 1900.

Plate XVIII

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Fig. 1. Philopotamidae with shelter

Fig. 2. Part of Philopotamidae with shelter

[facing p. 84 6]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

was a game which they encouraged. A lad of about thirteen collected some green leaves and tied them together with creeper, then taking an arrow, a toy *maaliya*, and a broken gourd tied with creeper, which hung over his arm, for a *mahadoma*, he set fire to the leaves and climbed the ladder[1]. While lowering the smoker and letting the smoke blow into the crevice in the rock where the comb was supposed to be, he pretended to cut round its sides with an arrow and thrust at it with his *maaliya* (figure 3), from which he transferred the honey into the gourd. As he descended from the ladder he beat his chest and sides as though driving off the bees, and directly he reached the ground rushed into the jungle to escape from them, all the smaller children imitating him with great glee. Obviously this was a well-known and favourite game, for even the elders took part in it, throwing their cloths over their heads and running into the jungle.

At Henebedda (which we visited before Pihillegodagalge) there were no children present when we spoke about honey getting, but four young men were eager to show us how it was done and acted the scene with great spirit. They took from our camp a piece of white and a piece of brown paper, and fastened them with some wax to the roof of their cave, then as there was no tree above the cave around which to fasten a creeper, one man crouched on the top of the rock and held the ends of the ladder in his hands, another stood above and lowered a smoker of green leaves while a third climbed the ladder and collected the honey from the white paper and the grubs from the brown. Afterwards the collector divided the spoil equally and amid much laughter they all sat down and pretended to eat, one actually going through the pantomime of washing his hands after the meal. They eat the grubs as well as the honey.

As regards clothing, pedlars have brought them cloth for so long that no Vedda living knows what was done when they could not buy it, but it is generally stated that they made bark

[1] The *mahadoma* is the vessel made of dooddia in which honey should be collected and the *maaliya* the wooden four-pronged implement with which the comb is broken up and transferred to the *mahadoma*. For figures of *mahadoma* and *maaliya*, see Plate LXV and figure 3 (p. 92) respectively.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

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Fig. 1. Alutyakagama ceremony, the shaman about to spin the pot of food (Unuwatura Bubula)

[417
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Fig. 2. Rawala ceremony, the *rawala* prepared by Wannaku of Uniche (Maha Oya)

[facing p. 262]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

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Fig. 1. Rock drawings in Pihilegodagalge cave

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Fig. 2. Rock drawings in Pihilegodagalge cave

[facing p. 329]

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●415
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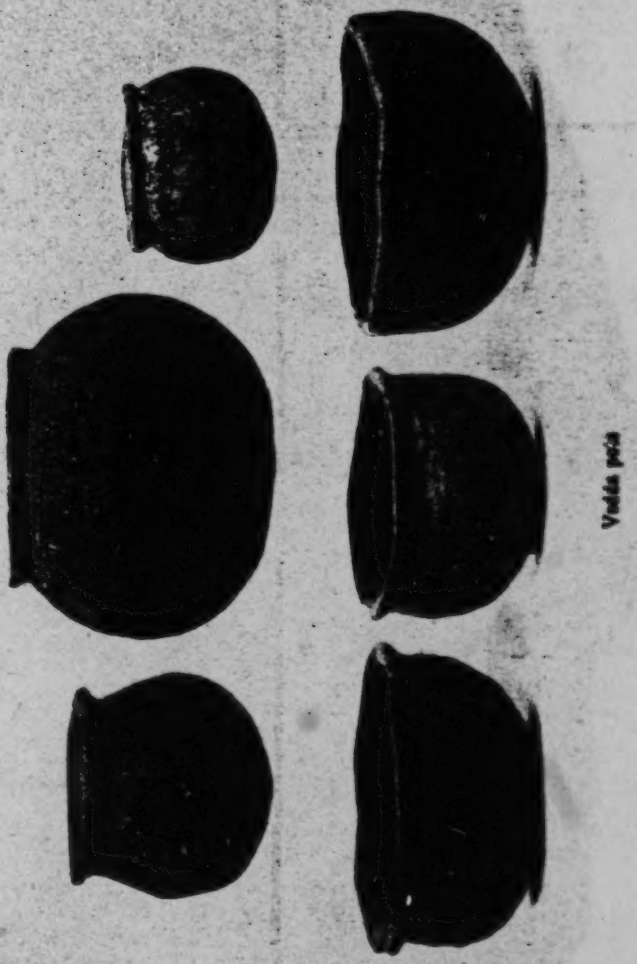

[facing p. 324]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

the work with songs, so as to get up a certain degree of excitement, necessary to carry them through the task. A song is chanted, and a little honey sprinkled for the spirits, before the combs are cut off the rock[1]."

Fig. 19. *Maulya* × 1/7.

Before honey collecting as many pots as possible are made and old pots and gourds are overhauled. The wooden sword which Nevill mentions is probably the *mauliya* (fig. 12). This is a stout stick about 2½ metres long with four prongs at one end, which the Vedda carries hanging by a loop from his forearm and which he uses to detach the comb and convey it into the vessel called a *mauludema* in which the honey is collected. This is also carried hanging from the forearm and should be made of deer's hide so that it may not be broken against the rocks as the honey collector swings to and fro. Plate LXV shows a *mauludema* collected at Sitala Wanniya. An arrow is also carried and is largely used in detaching the combs from the rock.

Before taking the honey a bundle of green leaves is set alight and lowered in order to stupefy the bees. The smoker is called *adiya* (Sin. *kula*) and the creeper attached to it *yatuvella*[2]. Several men of the community join together to collect rock-honey, the whole spoil being equally divided without any special consideration for the owner of the land, though it seemed that the owner would decide when the honey should be collected. The women accompany their men to crags and gulleys where the *henebara* build their combs. They hold torches and sing while the honey is being collected.

Plate LXVI shows a gourd, used as a hive for a colony of the stingless bee, hanging outside one

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 190.

[2] For the use of these see Chapter IV where the pantomime of honey getting is described.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1897-1909) 1911
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Plate LXV

Deerskin vessel (medicine) used for collecting honey

[facing p. 328a]

Plate LXVII

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281
276

Betel pouch made of monkey skin (Hambekkka)

[facing p. 330]

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AXS Vedda AXS

261 276 beautiful species of Gardenia with fragrant flowers and crimped laurel-like leaves. These seeds or nuts are astringent and to me resemble exactly in taste those of the areca palm. They are only an occasional luxury however. The bark which he chews is almost a necessity to a Vedda, the leaves or seeds a mere luxury[1]."

[105] 276 It is not always that the Veddas can obtain lime, which they make by burning the shells of a land snail *wantaiko* (*Cyclophorus involvulus*). The shells are laid on red hot pieces of charcoal, more glowing embers are heaped around and upon them, and the whole is fanned with a tuft of green leaves for a few minutes, when the embers surrounding the shells are raked away and the shells allowed to cool before being crushed and dropped into the vessel in which the lime is carried. This is often a tin match box or it may be a brass covered cartridge case. Specially made lime spatulae do not exist, but one Vedda of Henebedda had a long broad nail with which he removed the lime from his tin match box.

[415]

276 415 The betel pouch is usually a roughly sewn bag of trade cloth, but the Henebedda Veddas also make pouches of monkey skin, one of which is shown in Plate LXVII. We omitted to inquire how the hair was removed, but probably it was singed off, the whole skin being subsequently scraped.

[1] *Op. cit.* Vol. I. p. 152.

1; Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
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101 We found that the Coast Veddas spoke of themselves as
113 Verdas and said that long ago their fathers came from inland.
191 They all speak Tamil, but some assert that they still know, and at times use among themselves, their old Vedda language, but when we asked the men who made this statement to speak in their ancestral dialect they spoke Sinhalese[1]. Besides this a few of the older men know the names of some of the Vedda *warige*, while others are able to trace their descent to them.

142 The Coast Vedda is darker, taller and more stoutly built than the true Veddas. In fact they generally resemble low caste Tamils, yet in almost every settlement there are one or two men shorter than their comrades and presenting an almost typical Vedda caste of countenance. The women are all much
[291] bigger than true Vedda women and would pass for Tamils, after whose fashion they dress.

Plate LXVIII, figs. 1 and 2, represent Verdas from settlements to the north of Kalkudah.

241 The Verdas build comfortable huts in small clearings, usually
342 within a mile of the sea; they cultivate maize and pumpkins and other easily grown crops round their houses and in patches of clearing in the surrounding jungle.

415 They have plenty of pots and baskets and also possess drums
534 and fishing gear, so that their mode of life differs but little from
621 that of the poor and low caste Tamils who are their neighbours. One, two, or more rarely, three houses stand in each clearing, and it seems that the people living in each clearing are closely related by blood or connected by marriage.

361 The chief Verda settlements north of Batticaloa are Pellan-
505 chenai near Kalkudah 20 miles from Batticaloa and at Varkanari some 10 miles north of Kalkudah on the far side of the river which is crossed by a ferry at Valarchchenai. At Panichchenkeni some 14 miles further north is another ferry, where the local Verdas act as ferrymen, while there are two other Verda settlements some three miles beyond the ferry at sites called Vellaiade and Kandaladi respectively.

[1] Nevill (loc. cit.) noticed the same state of affairs, he said "Only the old men speak what they call Vaedda, which is pure but quaint Sinhalese with a Vaedda accent, as a rule, though mixed with some words characteristic of true Vaeddas."

Plate XIX

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Fig. 1. Settlement of Coast Veddas

[417]

Fig. 2. Settlement of Coast Veddas

[facing p. 332b]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1965 AX5 Vedda AX5

away more frightened than you. A scratching noise under your pillow may lead to the discovery of a scorpion or a centipede. Beetles, moths, biting ants, and insects of all descriptions investigate and experiment with you. But you soon learn to ignore these little draw-backs and drowse to the lullaby of some wood-land songster.

Tropical Nature is a stern mistress; her favours are never unalloyed. For him who would seek her she holds grievances in store, grievances that enhance the very joy they encumber; toning down ecstasy lest it pall with surfeit; giving to the contemplation of foregone experience that unfettered pleasure the reality denies, prompting us in after years to say, forgetful of all the hardships, "those were happy days we had".

The Verugal where it joined the Mahaweli was at this season an insignificant stream. Quite a colony of tobacco growers flourished here. Very picturesque are these settlements or *thelhes* as they are called. Four to six huts stand some distance apart in clearings along the bank, most of them beautifully overspread with melon-creepers. Every hut has its vegetable garden; and standing before them, like sentinels, are the draw-wells, usually in couples, that feed the tobacco plots direct from the river. The lowing of cattle under the superb trees that stud the clearing, the crowing of cocks, the sound of human voices complete the atmosphere of rural domesticity in this wild land and furnish scenes which would rejoice the heart of a painter.

Putting up one evening in a coconut grove owned by a Moor we found an unkempt ill-clad fellow seated on his haunches staring at some simple wares a pedlar was displaying. They told us he was a Vedda from a village some miles away. Becoming restless under our scrutiny he walked off. I followed him to his miserable shelter, where I found his daughter, a puny girl of four, covered with ulcers. Edging up towards her father she stared at us distrustfully with the eyes of a startled doe. A few broken pots were their sole belongings. The bond of tender solicitude that united these human derelicts, of no consequence except to each other, was indeed a touching sight. I asked the man what he did for a living. He said he "earned a rupee for two months work". He knew neither his nor his daughter's age, and when pressed for an answer said irritably, "What do I know of age? Am I a man who knows anything about age?" Blessed mortal!

We gave him a coin which he at first refused, and only accepted with persuasion; he had evidently never handled one like it before, for he looked at it puzzled and suspicious; and when the amount it represented was explained to him he was not enlightened.

"He knows nothing," said the Moor vociferously. "Ask him to count six and see if he can. He's a real bull. What does he know? He's a Vedda. For thirty-six cents he will bring a kerosene-tinful of *bambara** honey, and," he added chuckling with subtle satisfaction, "he does not know what thirty-six cents is!"

The next day we saw in the distance the blue contours of Gunner's Quoin, the goal of our journey. The river had now become considerably shallower with broad stretches of its sandy bed exposed. As we punted along the shady border, we suddenly came upon a most realistic piece of ancient sculpture—the life-sized head of an elephant carved out of a

*Rock-bee, *Apis dorsata*

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

We had hardly gained the base of the rock when we heard human voices and soon came up with three men and their dogs. One fellow carried a gun, the others had axes hitched to their shoulders. They were on their way to a devil dancing ceremony at a house of illness some miles away; but abandoning their project they accompanied us to their homes.

In a small clearing stood half a dozen leafy shelters. Outside one of these, three women with infants at the breast were seated roasting small yellow flowers. The rest of their people were at work on a *chena** close by. We summoned them and soon we had all the Veddas of the *Kotgaha Ulpotta* before us—some six or eight men and about a dozen women and children. They were a poor lot bearing the stigmata of malaria and framboesia. There was but one old man among them. The children were emaciated and languid.

Most of them showed strong traces of Tamil admixture, especially the women; what poor ornaments they wore, their clothing, and even their very names were Tamil; and so were their predilections if the coy smiles one or two of them bestowed on the fine Tamil that accompanied us signified anything. There were at least three men, however, true to Vedda type—short of stature, wild-eyed, with beardless face and upstanding frizzly hair.

They had no bows among them, except as playthings for the children, but made us one as a memento and stained it with charcoal and *thimbiri* to give it the appearance of use.

The huts were fashioned of wattle and leaves, and thatched with dry grass. Their domestic appointments comprised earthen pots, a wooden pestle and mortar, bark rope, and a deer skin or two.

Fruits, flowers, wild yams, honey, the flesh of animals, *kurrukkan*† and maize formed their food. The meat they fancied most was that of the langur and monitor lizard which they hunted with the lazy mongrels that loitered about. They eat abundantly and at any hour when food is plentiful; but as a rule one good meal a day is all they expect; in times of dearth they bear hunger stoically, chewing incessantly a few varieties of bark they carry in pouches fashioned of cloth saturated with melted wax (*ilee reithee*). Partial nomads, they spend many months of the year under trees and in caves. Where the *palu*, *vevra*, *kong*, or *mora*‡ fruit is ripe, where the hives are, there they take their women and children, dogs, and chattels and go.

"How often do you bathe?" I asked one of them, the smell of their ring-wormed bodies suggesting little acquaintance with water.

"What bathing for us," he replied. "We fall into a stream once in a way and get out again; that is our bath. And we only do that when our stomachs are full. When we are hungry we don't care for anything; we can eat even a man then!"

In answer to the question how they measured distances and what constituted a mile, the reply was, "We walk till our legs hurt, then we place our axes on the ground, sit down, take out our pouches, and chew a quid; that is our mile".

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*A patch of forest cleared for cultivation

†*Eleusine coracana*

‡*Minusops hexandra*, *Hemicyclia sepiaria*, *Schleichera trijuga*, *Nephelium longana*, respectively.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

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"Their homes, the shelter of the trees." (Page 9)

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Nakda and his family. (Page 9)

[Facing p. 9]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

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Dantota falls. (Page 39)

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Sinna, a Vedda of Gunner's Quoin. (Page 42)

[facing p. 39]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

to a cleft fragment of stone resembling a giant lizard crawling up the sheer face of the rock.

We found Bowala deserted. The young coconut and areca palms, plantains, sugar-canes and pine-apples there were choked with grass and lantana. The huts were falling to pieces and leaked like sieves as we found to our cost when a shower overtook us; the grass thatch, ruined by white ants, was the home of innumerable rats, brahmin-lizards and poisonous *karawalas** that hung head-down from the rafters ready to strike.

The desolate state of the hamlet is explainable by the *chena* life of the people. In December, as the crops ripen, they forsake their homes for the shacks of the *chena*, leaving perhaps an aged couple behind. In April, when the crops of *kurrukkan* and maize have been taken, they return to the village to repair their huts and wean back to life such plants as have survived the inroads of wild animals and weeds. In July, *chena* land is leased again; and so the wasteful routine is repeated. A hamlet occupied for six months and abandoned for six has not much chance of headway. If the population of a village is at all numerous, there are sufficient people to occupy both *chena* and village, without detriment to either; if the community is very small they remain *chena* dwellers with no permanent homes; if intermediate, we find the state of things at Bowala. In favoured places a mere nucleus of human beings swells in time to a thriving and populous village. But in the insalubrious *Vanni* privation and ignorance keep the numbers low. Two dwindling villages may combine to save one from extinction. Often a place populous to-day is a wilderness to-morrow and *vice versa*. This is typical of the kaleidoscopic way the forest hamlets change. Names so fine on maps—Illukpitiya, Mahaella, Embillene—are found when reached to be derelict; a crumbling hut perhaps hidden in jungle, or a hardy tamarind or palmyrah the sole witness of vanished homes.

Bowala folk are better jungle men than many farther inland. Though far from fastidious in their choice of meats, for they eat the mongoose and rat, they abhor the porcupine, sure mark of Vedda ancestry. They fashion bags of beaten *riti* bark and carry pouches of monkey skin that ladies might envy. Their bed-frames are spanned with sambur-hide, their powder flasks are the dried scrota of sambur. A monkey skin, stretched over a coconut shell fitted with handle, screw and string, and manipulated with a small bow, serves them as a violin out of which they scrape mournful disharmonies. They snare the smaller animals, such as the hare, pangolin and chevrotan, with *kalloakas* or weighted frames poised over passages used by these animals; we saw one of these set for chevrotan with a bundle of urine-drenched leaves for bait. Some among them could brave the formidable heights of Westminster Abbey in quest of the combs of the rock bee—the most hazardous of jungle pursuits.

We spent the night in a large cave at the base of Westminster Abbey and made the ascent next morning, replenishing our water bottles at a small basin formed by the buttressing roots of a rock-tamarind and rejoicing in the grandiloquent name, for so trivial a thing, of *Kalluru-pathaka* (gnat-water-hole).

It had rained all night and there was still a drizzle. Squeezing through crevices, crouching through low caves, climbing trees, clinging to rough

*Small venomous snakes.

Ac Spinal 39-6 (ca. 1920) 1945 AIS Vedda AIS

Hakkala, a weighted frame-work for trapping animals. (Page 48)

The dances of Dewals. (Page 49)

Dog [illegible] of threshed rice husk and monkey skin pouch. (Page 48)

Facing p. 497

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Lastly, there is the *kangotawa* (deer-skin receptacle for the honey), or *yukka-katte* (devil's mouth) as it is reverently called out of deference to the tutelary demons of the rock, who might otherwise be angered and send the cutter to his doom. 222 415 776

A pile of firewood is now collected on top of the rock to protect the guardians of the ladder, while another heap is made by those below. All being ready they await the protecting darkness. When this comes the play begins. The great fire at the foot of the rock is lit and fed abundantly with green leaves; large volumes of smoke lick uncannily up the side of the hill towards the hives; now there is a stir among the bees. As the Veddas hear it their merriment waxes great: "*Bambaru, bambaru, bambaru; thapita, thapita, thapita. Ho bambaru thuapa**;" they cry. "*Giddi, giddi, giddi*; *rung, rung, rung*," they jeer in imitation of the flight. 222 [372]

Meanwhile the fire above has been lighted, and two smoking *kulas* have been lowered towards the hives. The air is heavy with the ominous hum of angry bees.

Now is the time for the descent. The ladder, firmly secured to a tree or stone, and guarded by the brother-in-law of the cutter (the only person ineligible to marry his wife in the event of accident), is let down with a propitiatory incantation† to the demons of the rock and ancestral spirits. This being uttered, the hand grip is said to be strong and the feet to cling like jak milk to the stone. [58] 607 [782]

With smoking *kulas* looped to forearms and *matha* slung on shoulder, and hair dishevelled over his face that the bees may not get at his eyes and nose, the cutter, gripping the cane with a single hand, disappears over the edge of the cliff into the darkness and the smoke. The ladder creaks as he feels his way down, for he sees nothing.

He has reached the level of the hives. At a signal the deer-skin receptacle is lowered to him, and this he secures to the ladder. Thrusting a leg between two rungs so that his foot is on the lower and his bent knee against the upper, and his head between two others so that the back of his neck is braced against a rung, he is free to use his hands. First he smokes the hives with the *kulas* mounted on the *matha* and drives away the lingering bees. Then, slinging the *kulas* on his forearms, he takes up the stake and, with its pointed end, cuts horizontally through the lower part of the comb, separating off the useless *yukka* with its contained grubs which the bees stoutly defend. He next cuts the comb in vertical sections, and, loosening each from its attachment, spits it with the pronged end of the stake, removes it, and shakes it into the receptacle at his knee. Thus he deals with all the hives. [412]

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* "The bees, the bees, the bees; pile the fire, pile the fire, pile the fire. Ho! the bees run."

† Vaddiwanne it is called; and thus it goes:—

Hailoo, hailoo, hailoo.
Mo nisithagang kattakko nurichchoo.
Ahai ugang nunnalangin mulihi kahoory.
Mulihi wael upahara thiruwan hillowo.
Hiruwithayan nuallawo ugurugawo kuruwahagawo.
The baiky yunno, the baiky yunno, the baiky yunno.

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The finest Veddas we saw in Ceylon. (Page 93)

[facing p. 95]